



**Parks and Recreation Department Board
Minutes**

**February 27, 2001
Regular Meeting**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Board was held on Tuesday, February 27, 2001 in the Board Room of the Parks and Recreation Department Main Office located at 200 South Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas.

Board Members Present: Rosemary Castleberry, Mary Ruth Holder, Rocky Medrano, Clint Small, Amy Babich, Jeff Francell, Carol Kim and Rhonda Taylor.

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Jesus M. Olivares, Director, Stuart Strong, Randy Scott, Juan Valera-Lema, Don Koehler, Renee Barrera, Jay Stone, Kimberley Mitchell and Dina Haines.

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Rosemary Castleberry, Chair.

- B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**, from the January 23 and February 13, 2001 meetings. **Board Member Holder** made the motion to adopt the minutes as amended. **Board Member Small** second the motion. **The Board was in favor 7-0-0.**

Board Member Taylor arrives at 6:53 p.m.

C. PRESENTATIONS

Jean Drew, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department distributed the Watershed Protection Master Plan to Board Members and gave a brief presentation. The Master Plan inventoried existing watershed problems and the need for additional funding to correct future development predicted to continue the threat of creek flooding, localized flooding, streambank erosion and water quality degradation. Board Chair Castleberry referred this item to the Land and Facilities subcommittee.

Stuart Strong, Division Manager, Planning, Design and Construction made a brief presentation regarding the Town Lake Park and Colorado River Park. Mr. Strong stated the Town Lake Park was in the Cultural Landscaping phase of the project around the building. In April, the construction bids for the roads will be the next focus. For Colorado River Park there are 4 million dollars left in the project fund to spend on next phase improvements. The Colorado River Park will have two ballfields and open fields play areas for Soccer. The main concern at the moment is the flood plain and the need to control erosion in the park caused by Country Club Creek and the Colorado River. The solution from the consultants is to build a levee to control water flow and erosion caused by Country Club Creek.

Juan Valera-Lema, Division Manager, Natural Resources discussed the recent grant from the U.S. Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service to Travis County and City of Austin to purchase additional land for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves. The amount of the grant is 14.3 million. The preserves provide prime habitat for several endangered species, including the golden-cheeked warbler and black capped vireo.

Don Koehler, Manager of Balcones Canyonlands Preserve gave a presentation regarding the Preserves' expanded public access program. This program provides public information to citizens through press releases, tours, field trip and printed material. Depending on the tract of preserves, not all forms of recreation are permitted due to sensitivity of the endangered species the preserves were established to protect. During nesting season, which falls between March 1 to July 31, access to Forest Ridge is being limited to hiking by permit. For more information regarding the Preserves access, Mr. Koehler suggested contacting the Preserve office. **Board Member Francell** expressed his appreciation to Preserve staff for the tremendous progress they have made on creating opportunities for public access to the preserves.

D. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Oliver Franklin, Executive Director, Texas Historical Foundation
Ron Turner and **Ruben Rodriquez**, Landmark Organization

E. ITEMS FOR ACTION

3. Make a Recommendation to City Council on the relocation of the Susanna Dickinson House. *Item number three was pulled to the beginning of the actions at the request of Board Chair Castleberry.*

Council Member Will Wynn spoke in support of the relocation of the Susanna Dickinson House to Old Bakery site. Last summer, City Council approved the new convention center hotel. The Susanna Dickinson house is located on the property proposed for the new hotel to be built. A tentative agreement was made at the time to move the house to a temporary location and once the hotel was

constructed to relocate the house into the hotel lobby to be used as a possible gift shop. As early as fall a number of individuals interested in the preservation of this historic home tried to figure out another possible location. Ground breaking for the new hotel is expected within the next two months.

After discussion, **Board Member Holder** raised concerns about whether the house could be moved more than once because it might not be able to withstand being moved to a temporary location and then to a permanent one. She also explained to the Board members that at the February 20th Land and Facilities subcommittee meeting, there were questions about who would pay the costs of restoring the house because there are no funds for restoration and maintenance in PARD's budget. She pointed out that in the Board members' materials, is a sheet setting forth the Landmark Organization's commitment to pay over \$500,000 for the cost of moving the house and for the development of a restoration plan.

Tom Meadows, a board member of the Texas Historical Foundation spoke in favor of relocating the house to the Old Bakery site. Mr. Meadows stated that the mission of the Texas Historical Foundation is to serve past, present and future Texans by supporting research in and in publication of Texas history, assisting in the preservation of historic artifacts and information, raising and providing funds for these purposes in order to recognize and honor past generations and to enrich the awareness of and pride in Texas heritage for present and future generations. Mr. Meadows believes this project would serve the mission as stated. The Texas Historical Foundation has been working on a plan for the organization to restore the home and occupy it, using it for the organization's offices and opening portions of it to the public on a regularly scheduled basis to view a "women in Texas history" display including information about Susanna Dickinson. The Foundation would maintain the home on an ongoing basis. Mr. Oliver Franklin, Executive Director of the Foundation, also spoke in support of the relocation and said he was available to answer any questions from the Parks Board.

Board Chair Castleberry asked a question concerning the Texas Historical Foundation moving their offices into the Susanna Dickinson House. Mr. Olivares stated that the City of Austin law department would review the arrangement and would draw up an agreement that would ensure a public benefit from the relocation. Board Member Kim stated her concern that the Old Bakery Board needed to be informed about the relocation to the site next door to the Old Bakery.

Julie Fitch, Downtown Austin Alliance also attended and stated that the Downtown Austin Alliance is in support of the relocation of the Susanna Dickinson House to the Old Bakery site.

Board Member Holder made the motion the Parks and Recreation Board recommend to City Council that the Susanna Dickinson House be moved to the Old Bakery site with the understanding the Parks and Recreation Department will not provide financial support for the restoration or maintenance of the House and

subject to the conditions that the City Legal Department will review the legal issues involved with the relocation, restoration, and management of the House and that the Old Bakery Board will be informed of the relocation. The Board further recommends that City Council explore a long-term fund raising and management agreement for the restoration and management of the House with the Texas Historical Foundation. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

1. Make Recommendation Regarding the Construction of Bulkheading on Lamar, Johnson, and Janek Boat Docks and Retaining Wall on Lots 2 - 4 in Hidden Valley.

Board Member Small stated this item had come before the navigation committee on two occasions. **Board Member Small** made the motion to approve the bulkheading replacement and boat docks. **Board Member Francell** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

2. Make Recommendation Regarding the Construction of Waite Bulkhead.

Board Member Small stated this existing boat dock needed repair. **Board Member Small** made the motion to approve this request. **Board Member Francell** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 7-0-1.** **Board Member Babich** abstained.

4. Make Recommendation to City Council Regarding a Parkland Use Agreement for a flood control project in Northeast District Park.

George Oswald, Watershed Protection Department, made a brief presentation to the board. Mr. Oswald stated there are 175 homes in the flood plain. After evaluating the flood plain, it was decided that there are two routes in which to proceed, channelizing the creek or the construction of a levee system. The other approach is to build a levee system around the neighborhood to keep the floodwaters from entering the neighborhood. It was decided that a levee system along the creek would be preferable to channelizing the creekbed. Watershed is also going to upgrade the internal drainage system, which is severely deficient. **Board Member Holder** stated this item had been before the Land and Facilities committee and had support from the neighborhood to construct the concrete wall to prevent the recurring flooding of the neighborhood which has experienced serious flooding in the past. Mr. Oswald also informed the board that landscaping will be put in front of the wall and after a few years the wall would be covered with vegetation. **Board Member Taylor** asked a question concerning the timeline of this project with regards to the Loyola Road enhancement project. Mr. Oswald stated that he would hope to have the same contractor completing the road as well as the levee system. The project will be in two phases, Phase I will be the drainage sewer line and Phase II will be the levee system. The project will be completed in the year 2003.

Board Member Holder made the motion to City Council to approve the Parkland Use Agreement for flood control project in Northeast District Park. **Board Member Francell** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

5. Make Recommendation to City Council Regarding Parkland Use Agreement for the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of a Storm Sewer Line and lowering of a Wastewater Line from Robert E. Lee Road to Town Lake.

Stuart Strong gave a brief presentation. Mr. Strong stated the pipe currently underground is not wide enough to support the storm water runoff from Barton Springs Road. To solve a long existing drainage issue, the project includes the reconstruction of the existing storm sewer by installing a double box culvert between Town Lake to Barton Springs Road. The storm sewer has been designed to minimize the impact on the parkland.

Board Member Francell made the motion to recommend to City Council to allow the Parkland Use Agreement for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a Storm Sewer line. **Board Member Taylor** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

6. Make Recommendation to City Council Regarding Parkland Use Agreement for the Construction, Operation and Maintenance of Storm Sewer Lines in Town Lake Park on the East and West side of the Drake Bridge.

Stuart Strong stated that due to recent construction around City Hall and on the bank of Town Lake there is a need to enlarge the drainage pipes on both sides of the Drake Bridge. The project entails digging a tunnel under the trail. The Parks and Recreation Department will have to reroute trail users on a temporary basis. Mr. Strong stated that signs and flagmen would redirect trail users.

Board Member Holder stated this item had been before Land and Facilities. **Board Member Holder** made the motion to recommend that City Council approve the Parkland Use Agreement for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the storm sewer line in Town Lake Park on the East and West side of the Drake bridge. **Board Member Kim** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

7. Make Recommendation to City Council Regarding Parkland Use Agreement for the Renovation of a Wastewater Line through Mayfield Park.

Board Member Holder stated that she, Rosemary Castleberry, Stuart Strong and Renee Barrera walked the line of the project in Mayfield Park. Ms. Holder stated the group had concerns as to how to get certain equipment down the hill without severely damaging the preserve. The project has now been designed to avoid this result. Mr. Strong also gave a brief presentation to the board. Mr. Strong stated this project was needed to improve the sewer line and will have minimal impact on the park.

Rene Barrera, Preserve Employee spoke to the Board regarding restoration of the Mayfield Preserve after the work has been completed. He is working closely with Water and Wastewater to ensure that the area will be completely restored.

Board Member Holder made the motion to recommend that City Council approve the Parkland Use Agreement for renovation of a wastewater line through Mayfield Park with the understanding that all of the restoration work that is identified by PARD Preserve staff will be completed by Water and Wastewater. **Board Member Francell** seconded the motion. **The motion passed in favor 8-0-0.**

8. Make Recommendation to Planning Commission Regarding Request for Zoning Change in the Waterfront Overlay Zone from SF3 to MF6, 1400 Edgecliff Street - C14-01-002 and 1400 E. Riverside Drive - C14-01-0001.

Board Chair Castleberry pulled this item from the agenda at the request of **Board Member Holder** and referred it to the Land and Facilities Subcommittee.

9. Make Recommendation to Director Regarding Gondola Concession Concept on Town Lake.

Board Member Small made the recommendation to the Director to move forward with the Gondola concession concept and for Parks and Recreation Department staff to have a public hearing regarding the Gondola concept. **Board Member Francell** seconded the motion. **Board Member Holder** stated her concern that the concept of a gondola concession did not seem appropriate for Austin. **The motion passed in favor 5-2-1** **Board Members Holder and Babich** voted no and **Board Member Taylor** abstained.

Jay Stone, Financial Manager stated that PARD would hold a public hearing and once that had been completed, he would submit the RFP. Mr. Stone stated the process could take up to 6 to 8 months to complete.

E. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jesus Olivares informed the board that he had attended a meeting at the Montopolis Recreation Center with Interfaith regarding the ball fields at Montopolis. Watershed Protection Department required Parks and Recreation Department to do a re-drainage study for the addition of two new ball fields delaying the project 5 months. The delay has caused the Interfaith group to be upset with Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Olivares stated after the meeting an understanding was reached. The Parks and Recreation intends to build the fields along with an agreement with Lower Colorado River Authority to do the ball field lights. Mr. Olivares stated the project could be completed within 90 days.

Mr. Olivares informed the board of a meeting he had attended with Austin Community College regarding Riverside Golf Course. ACC is considering selling the golf course. Mr. Olivares met with the assistant vice president to extend PARDs interest in purchasing the Riverside Golf Course. Mr. Olivares said he would keep the board inform of any further discussions.

Mr. Olivares informed the Board that the department was about to start on the budget 5 year forecast and that the Board would be informed of that forecast as well.

F. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs Committee

Board Member Medrano passed out information regarding the pool schedules.

Land and Facilities Committee

Items of discussion at the last meeting other than those considered at tonight's meeting included:

- A presentation on the present Seaholm Master Plan

- Update on the proposal to rename Northwest District Park

- Sidewalk Resolution and a resolution concerning Closing of Riverside Drive for Earth Free Day. (These items were determined by the Subcommittee to be transportation items for the Public Works Department rather than Parks Department/Board items.)

Navigation Committee

Items discussed were the two boat docks on the agenda.

Bond Oversight Committee

Board Chair Castleberry informed the Board that the committee had met last Thursday evening, they did a work plan to focus more on transportation and next month they intends to focus on PARD and talk about CIP projects.

Gardens at Bull Creek

No update.

G. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Board Member Francell stated he would like mountain bikers to be trained and permitted to enter the Forest Ridge Preserves during the non-nesting season and with a permit required. **Board Member Holder** stated that mountain bicycle access to the preserve lands or other "wilderness" areas in Austin should also be balanced against hiking access because of the potential conflict between the two user groups, for example, along the Barton Creek greenbelt, and the user safety concerns that can arise.

H. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:47 p.m.

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1. Make a Recommendation to City Council Regarding a Parkland Use Agreement and Permanent Slope Easement Related to Phase II and Phase III of the Loyola Lane Right-of-Way.

Presentation by Dolores Duran, Public Works Department